



Florida League of Cities
2008 Florida City of Excellence Award Nomination
Submitted by the City of Winter Park

Considered by many to be the premier urban village in Florida, the City of Winter Park, with its rich heritage, strong sense of community, vast parks system, diverse economic base, and pristine chain of lakes, provides a high quality of life to its 28,000 residents and visitors alike. Located just three miles north of Orlando, Winter Park's nine square miles is known for its Old World charm, bricked streets, extensive tree canopy, and unique cultural experiences.

GOVERNANCE/ADMINISTRATION:

- After months of meetings, the City Commission adopted their strategic plan in June 2008 that includes the new vision statement: *"We aspire to continue to be the best place to live, work and play in Central Florida by preserving a superior quality of life for today's residents and for future generations."* This vision was approved unanimously as part of the overall **City Strategy Map**, a concise summary of the city's strategic plan that also includes its values, characteristics that make Winter Park different, strategic objectives and initiatives.
- Winter Park's **Fire-Rescue Department (WPFD)** and **Police Department (WPPD)** continue to hold some of the best response times in Florida and maintain their internationally (WPFD) and nationally (WPPD) accredited status. The WPFD placed in the top one percent of fire departments in the United States with a Class 2 rating from the **Insurance Services Office**. WPPD is the only police department in the country to receive the IACP Technology Award for traffic safety on two occasions. Winter Park was also the only municipality in Orange County to experience a crime reduction in 2006.

CITY LEADERSHIP:

- City management is proud to employ 13 directors who have **190 years of combined service**. Four directors have over 20 years of service. Employee tenure averages 16 years which provides excellent history, experience and knowledge about Winter Park.
- After serving 13 years as Assistant City Manger, **Randy Knight** was unanimously appointed by the commission in October 2008 to serve as **City Manager**. Strategic plan initiatives are evaluated on a weekly basis with department directors. Although state-mandated budget reductions have presented economic challenges, Mr. Knight presented a balanced budget in July 2008. His recommended solutions included some of the following efficiencies:
 - Implementation of on-site employee health clinic providing convenient, cost-efficient medical care and reducing the amount of employee claims
 - Early retirement incentives
 - Revisions to merit pay increase schedule
 - Reduction of direct mail
 - Elimination of take home vehicles

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:

The City of Winter Park values the importance of establishing strong intergovernmental partnerships including:

- Partnering with Rollins College to establish/implement the city-wide **OUTREACH Emergency Notification System**.
- Partnering with Winter Park Chamber of Commerce to develop new **Winter Park Welcome Center**.

- Funding **Winter Park Public Library** - the number one library in the state of Florida.
- Partnering with **Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA)** for disaster preparedness.
- Obtaining grant funding to accomplish city's strategic initiatives such as the new **Howell Branch Preserve, Housing Rehabilitation Program, Golf Course Exfiltration Project, Children's Spray Ground and the Hannibal Square Heritage Center.**

CITIZEN OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT:

The City of Winter Park goes above and beyond to keep residents informed. Citizen input is encouraged via various resources including:

- **Resident Survey:** conducted on a bi-annual basis to obtain feedback regarding resident satisfaction and needs.
- **Charrettes/Town Meetings/Workshops:** seeks resident input on issues such as development, commuter rail, transportation and community/neighborhood concerns.
- **City Web Site:** www.cityofwinterpark.org maintained on a daily basis to keep residents informed electronically.
- **citE-news:** free e-mail service for updates on specific categories of interest.
- **CoffeeTalk:** informal gatherings for community to meet with elected officials and city leaders.
- **Code Enforcement Compliance Program:** provides residents incentive to improve the appearance of their home and receive city awards and recognition.
- **Emergency Preparedness Events:** held on a regular basis to educate community about emergency situations such as bird flu, hurricanes and other natural disasters.
- **Communication Tools:** Press releases, strong media relations, in-house marketing, bill inserts, posters/flyers, and newsletters including: *Winter Park Update* (bi-monthly), weekly article in community paper, *Hannibal Herald* for CRA property owners, and *Waterways*.

TECHNOLOGY:

In order to provide top-quality services to residents, the City of Winter Park is proud to remain on the cutting edge. New tools implemented include the following:

- **Information Technology Division:** implemented new series of technology that allowed the WPPD's mobile fingerprint units to work with fingerprint databases of Orange County and Orlando. In addition, replacement of the microwave link between local municipalities with fiber increased reliability, security and efficiency for transactions between agencies.
- **OUTREACH Emergency Alert System:** robust system that uses home phones, cell phones, e-mail and outdoor sirens to notify residents of emergencies.
- **WI-Fi:** allows residents and visitors to obtain online access in key outdoor parks and facilities.
- **Police Radio Transmission Encryption:** allows police department to communicate with other agencies in a secure environment. WPPD is the first department in Central Florida to have all law-enforcement officer radios fully encrypted.
- **Automatic Meter Reading:** recently approved funding will allow for wireless data transmissions regarding water usage.
- **SCADA Flow Management:** allows city to manage wastewater collection flows and lift station operations reducing expenditures in the areas of maintenance, power consumption and flow capacity.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS/SERVICES:

Ambulance Safety Initiative (ASI): In 2004, the WPFD initiated the effort to redesign the modern American ambulance creating a safer transport environment for paramedics and patients. The federal government is now in full review of ambulance guidelines and is attempting to adopt several of the ASI design components.

Electric Undergrounding: After taking ownership of the electric distribution system in 2005 and to improve reliability, in January 2008 the city began its 30+ year initiative to underground its city-owned power lines. If desired, residents can accelerate this process through the city's cost-sharing program, PLUG IN (Putting Lines Under Ground In Neighborhoods).

Hannibal Square Community Land Trust (HSCLT): The Canton Park and West Comstock Redevelopment Projects provide new affordable housing and serve as models for upcoming HSCLT projects to provide affordable, green, energy-efficient, neighborhood-friendly homes.

Ozone Treatment: The Water Utility Department converted the city's three water treatment plants to an ozone purification system which reduces the amount of chlorination needed and produces better tasting water.

Railroad Avenue/Swoop Water Treatment Plant: This award winning project showcases the city's ability to address two needs: affordable housing and a new water treatment facility with one innovative solution.